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fore I began to read, they could not help saying, as they collected round me, 'only think of such a great man as the Bishop coming between decks to pray with such poor fellows as we are!' Who can tell what good may result from these humble efforts?—greater perhaps than from his more public and splendid labours, which are followed by the admiration of the world. These are unseen and unknown;—for who would expect to find the Bishop of India, the accomplished Heber, praying by the cots of a few disabled soldiers, between the decks of a merchant vessel?—but *his Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward him openly.*"

Essay on the History, Religion, Learning, Arts, and Government of Ireland, from the Birth of Christ to the English Invasion. By John D'Alton, Esq. M. R. I. A. &c.—Dublin; R. Graisberry.

[UNPUBLISHED.]

SECOND NOTICE.

IN our former review of this able and laborious work, which we may justly style a national one, we conducted our readers through the first period in the author's division, namely that extending from the earliest records of the kingdom, to the year 431. The second and third periods, of which we shall now endeavour to present as complete an analysis as our brief limits will permit, embrace, the former the interval between the arrival of St. Patrick, A.D. 431, and the Danish invasion, A.D. 795; the latter, from this invasion till the battle of Clontarf, A.D. 1014. We shall commence with the following brief sketch of the life of St. Patrick:—

"He was carried captive into Ireland, ('captivus apud Scotos,') at the age of sixteen, when wholly ignorant of the true God; ('Anorum eram tunc fere sedecim, Deum verum ignorabam; et Hiberione in captivitate adductus sum;') and there it was, as he admits, that Christianity revealed itself to him; while the employment, in which he was occupied by his master, afforded ample opportunities for continued rumination, 'quotidie pecora pascbam.' Or as Nennius has it, 'porcarius illo erat.' From this bondage he effected his escape, and although he was again led into slavery, ('iterum post annos non multos captivum dedi,') the same providential interposition once more released him. The remembrance, however, of the beautiful island he had seen clouded with heathenism, concurred with his piety in inducing him to attempt a thorough conversion there. His confession attributes the resolution to a vision, which, under the influence of such thoughts, it was extremely probable he should have had, ('vidi in visu nocte virum venientem quasi de Hibernia, &c.')

"The death of Palladius hastened the departure of this new missionary, and accordingly his first landing is recorded as occurring in A.D. 432, on the shore of Dublin, ('consummato igitur navigio ac labore, S. Patricius in optatum portum regionis Evoleborum, utique apud nos clarissimum, delatus est,') which harbour sounds like the 'portum Eblanorum' of Ptolemy, (i. e. of Dublin;) and the word 'clarissimum' seems to fortify the description given by Tacitus of the ports of Ireland. After various repulses and persecutions, and being not unfrequently driven out to sea by the pagan Irish, he at length arrived in view of Tara, at the very time when king

Leogaire was celebrating a heathen festival, and his Magi were about displaying that sacred fire, until the lighting of which no other flame was permitted to be kindled. Saint Patrick, however, had the confidence to raise such a beacon blaze at Slane, as was plainly distinguished from the heights of Tara; the king, no less alarmed than astonished, appealed to his Magi, and earnestly inquired by whom or for what purpose it was displayed, and it was then that these priests are recorded to have made the memorable reply:—'This fire, which has to-night been kindled in our presence, before the flame was lit up in your palace, unless extinguished this very night, shall never be extinguished more. Yea, it will triumph over all the fires of our ancient rites, and he who lights it shall scatter your kingdom.' The prediction was happily fulfilled; Leogaire, after some opposition, renounced the religion of his ancestors, and his royal example was soon followed by many of his court. Even the chief poet of the king believed, and with the zeal of a new proselyte, converted the poems, in which he had celebrated false gods, to hymns in praise of the Almighty and his sacred ministers.

"After these successes the venerable missionary retired to the seclusion of Croagh Patrick, a mountain in the province of Connaught, where he passed forty days in exercises of devotion and mortification; a part of the narrative which Matthew of Westminster confirms. From this retreat he came forth with renovated enthusiasm, and wherever he traversed the country, Christianity beamed, and churches sprang up around him. About A.D. 455 he founded the Cathedral of Armagh, ('et edificavit in eo monasteria et habitationes religionum virorum, in quo loco jam civitas est Ardmacb nominata, ubi sedes episcopatus et regiminis est Hiberniæ;') investing it with a traditional supremacy, which William of Newburgh confirms, and on this occasion he deposited there his celebrated crosier, which became so famous under the name of the staff of Jesus, Saint Bernard, indeed, insinuates that the possession of it and of Saint Patrick's text of the gospels almost conferred the bishopric; and Cumbrensis intimates that it was removed to Dublin, possibly to aid the claim of supremacy advanced by that province.

"Saint Patrick next founded a church in Dublin, and when Ireland seemed inspired with the true faith, he appears to have even extended his labours to the neighbouring coasts of Scotland and England, and to the Isle of Man.—(See Jocelyn, Vita S. Patricii, c. 92; Usher's Index Chron. p. 518; Ware's Bishops, p. 20, &c. &c.) Hence the Chronicon Manniæ, while it frequently mentions the isle and church of Saint Patrick in Man, expressly says, that according to all traditions, he was the first who preached the catholic faith in that island. His labours terminated only with his life, which, according to all accounts, was prolonged to nearly the close of the sixth century, when 'in senectute bonâ migravit ad Dominum, ubi nunc lætatur in sæcula sæculorum.'"

In this extract we have purposely omitted the paragraph which assumes that St. Patrick was sent under the sanction and as the delegate of the Roman pontiff. It is a matter of opinion upon which we entirely differ from Mr. D'Alton, for we have seen no sufficient evidence to satisfy us even that St. Patrick ever visited Rome; but we avoid the controversy altogether,

because we have no space to do it justice. Immediately after this summary of his life, two controverted questions respecting him are discussed by our author: first, the notion adopted by Ledwich, but long since, as we conceive, universally exploded, that St. Patrick never existed at all; the other, the opinion put forward by Sir William Betham, in his "Antiquarian Researches," "that the first Apostle of Ireland, Patrick, the Roman Briton, introduced Christianity into Ireland centuries before the year 430," and that Palladius, who came in that year, was sent by pope Celestine to eradicate the Pelagian heresy, which had now crept into the Irish church, after it had long flourished in Apostolic purity.

Without pretending to decide the question as to the precise period of the arrival of St. Patrick, we may be permitted to observe that there seems no reasonable ground of doubt that Christianity existed in our island long before his time, inasmuch, that he found Christian bishops there, some of whom actually gave in their adhesion to him, as primate and metropolitan of all Ireland.

With the point at issue between Mr. D'Alton, and Sir William Betham, we are not disposed to meddle very deeply, and shall therefore only observe, that it is one of considerable interest, and which we should like to see treated at greater length and with more minute research, by a person of competent learning and perfectly unprejudiced mind: but we cannot help thinking, that Mr. D'Alton, in his ardour to overthrow the arguments of his antagonist, makes much too light of the authority of the book of Armagh, with the contents of which he appears to be but slightly acquainted; a circumstance the more remarkable in a writer who quotes as authority, without hesitation, the much more apocryphal and modern farrago of the monk Jocelyn. The antiquity of the book of Armagh, appears to us to be quite unquestionable: it is proved by internal evidence—by the frequent notices of it in our ancient annals, and by the concordant testimonies in its favour of Usher, Ware, Lluyd, and O'Connor. And it surprises us not a little to find, that Mr. D'Alton, himself so strenuous an advocate for the early civilization of Ireland, seems to throw discredit upon its authenticity, for the very reason, that it bears testimony to a degree of refinement, which Mr. D. appears, strangely enough, in this place to deem incredible. We confess we are inclined to look upon the book of Armagh, believing it as we do an incontrovertible manuscript of the seventh century, as furnishing some of the strongest evidences extant, of the early and advanced progress of mind, and of the cultivation both of the useful and the elegant arts in this country. Another point of critical sagacity respecting the same M.S. in which we are at issue with our author, is, that he objects to the copy of St. Patrick's Confessio contained in this volume, that it wants many passages which are to be found in the other copies he refers to. No doubt it does; but the natural inference is, that this is the first and genuine copy, from which the others have been taken, and passages which do not bear at all the stamp of authenticity have been subsequently interpolated in them. Indeed we think that even without the aid of the earlier and simpler copy, the interlarded passages might have been detected by a critical eye, and we feel satisfied that if any composition from the pen of Patrick does now exist,

it is the very one contained in the book of Armagh.

We pass with pleasure, however, from these *veritate questiones*, to the less obscure results of St. Patrick's preaching:—

"It threw a sudden illumination over the island, the curious flocked in from every quarter, and went back to their families converts and proselytes; Episcopal jurisdictions were marked out, and prelates and clergymen were commissioned, in numbers sufficient for the labours of religious controversy and spiritual direction. Ecclesiastical schools were every where established. 'The country was filled with bishops, priests, and religious houses; the monks dispersed themselves into every corner, and no place was more celebrated for the sanctity and learning of its several monastic orders. The retreats which they pitched upon, they cleared and cultivated with their own hands, they fasted and prayed without intermission, and preached even more by their example than their precept. Hence, the name of the sacred island, or the island of saints, was given to it.' It has been justly remarked, that this 'quick and easy reception of Christianity in Ireland, is an unequivocal proof, not only of the liberal and tolerating spirit of the religion it supplanted, but also of enlightened civilization and charitable forbearance certainly without parallel in the early records of the Christian world;" and Giraldus himself admits, that in the retrospect of centuries, the saints of the island were all confessors, and not one a martyr. It was also the natural result of the mild and conciliating manners of the new priesthood, the charities with which they insinuated their doctrine into the heart of the country, founding their seminaries where the Magi had taught, enclosing their casols in the groves of the ancient rites, carving the sign of Christianity on the pillar stones of heathenism, consecrating as stations for prayer those wells which had been invested with immemorial superstitions; kindling the bel-tinne for purposes of innocent diversion, perpetuating the sacred fire on the altar of the Most High, and, above all, constructing the simple models of their churches in the shadow of the round towers: thus imperceptibly 'succeeding to the veneration and authority of their pagan predecessors.'

"The Christian ecclesiastics were, however, not the less firm, where firmness was essential. They diligently expounded the scriptures to the people, as Jonas relates of Columba. The enemy were met in controversy at their strongest holds, and piles of heathen learning, the spoils of victory, were consigned to unrelenting destruction. Saint Patrick sanctioned the policy of this despoliation, and is said to have destroyed with his own hand two hundred volumes of the writings of the Magi. His successors, no less zealous in the cause of truth, well merited these praises which Camden so liberally bestows upon them, enlarging their schools, multiplying their churches, fixing themselves as beacons of salvation in the wildest districts, every where edifying by their example, they drew to their schools the young and the old, while the converts gladly flocked to their habitations for more frequent spiritual assistance. Thus were little cities associated and monasteries incorporated."

Of the labours of these Irish ecclesiastics in foreign missions, Mr. D'Alton thus speaks:

"The history of these glorious missions

would claim a volume for itself. Columba early converted the Picts, and, as has been mentioned, founded the monastery of Iona, so celebrated for learning and classic collections, that according to Gibbon, it opened a hope of furnishing a complete Livy. Fursey, in 637, established Cnobersburgh, now Burgh Castle, in Suffolk. Maidulph is said to have erected Malmesbury, previously called Ingleborne, where, about the year 676, he instructed the English youth in classic literature; and that some ecclesiastics of the same country, extended their charitable labours even to Iceland, may be inferred from the remarkable tradition preserved in the *Antiquitates Celto-Scandinaviae*, (p. 14.) relative to the discovery of Iceland by the Norwegians.

"Enlarging the sphere of their proselytism, they founded the most flourishing schools of Christian Europe, and to them the world is indebted for the introduction of scholastic divinity, and the application of philosophic reasoning to illustrate the doctrines of theology, as Benedict, a writer of the eighth century, has mentioned, and Mosheim recorded. All, who are conversant with the literature of the continent, encounter perpetual acknowledgments for the benefits conferred on its kingdoms by Irish ecclesiastics."

The particulars of the christian doctrine then professed in Ireland, we necessarily pass over, as beyond the scope of this summary.—We shall merely mention, that on the one side the learned archbishop Usher maintains "that the ancient Irish Christians differed much from the faith and doctrine now received in the Roman church, particularly concerning the books of canonical scripture, justification, purgatory, the real presence, confession, absolution, Easter, church power, and the supremacy," while Dr. Lanigan in his very learned and recondite *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, combats these opinions of the Primate, with great zeal and ability. For ourselves, it seems sufficient to observe, that to Protestants the single argument appears conclusive, that we point to periods long subsequent to the establishment of Christianity in Ireland, for the dates of the beginnings of these "strange doctrines," in the Roman church; and, therefore, even supposing it admitted that the ancient Irish Christians at that time fully conformed to its then received doctrines, there is nothing done towards proving that they embraced that form of religion, which we now call the Roman Catholic.

But we turn from grisly saints and martyrs hairy, to the consideration of the science and learning of the time:—

"Gratifying as it should be to an Irishman, to find his country maintaining at this period such a pre-eminence in her foreign relations, as the last section has exhibited, it is a still more splendid enjoyment to contemplate her in the pride of her home, surrounded with Christian charities, and basking in the revelation of science. When the rest of Europe was, as Doctor Campbell expresses it, 'canopied in ignorance;' when the Roman Empire was crumbling into ruin, and darkness hung over its pagan tributaries, the children of Ireland alone 'had light in their dwellings.'—Their country was, as Aldhelm is obliged to describe it, in that letter of jealous sarcasm which Usher has preserved in the 'Sylloge,' a country rich in the wealth of science, and as thickly set with learned men as the poles

are with stars. She was the asylum of religion, the storehouse of learning, the guide of youth. Like the pelican of the east, she gathered her alimient in the desert, and opened her bosom to the young."

"Marts, of literature, to which all nations flocked, were opened throughout the island.—The school of Armagh, according to the Tripartite, was the head of these academies, ('summum studium literale.') The English annals, cited by Magnusius, make mention of no less than 7000 matriculated students resident there at one time; in fact, a division of the town was called Trian-Saxon, as long set apart for English students, who then flocked to Ireland. Besides this academy, Saint Patrick was also the founder of another celebrated seminary at Louth. Ibar, his contemporary, had a school at Beg-erin. In the sixth century, a great university was established at Clonard, which, in the enthusiasm of monkish praise, is termed the repository of saints, the hive of Christian wisdom, and the cradle of sanctity. Other schools were established at Roscarberry, Cork, Lismore, Roscrea, Clonfert, Clonmacnois, in the romantic valleys of Glendaloch, at Cashel, Leighlin, Fore, Kildare, at Slane, where Dagobert, the prince of Austrasia, during the exile before mentioned, is supposed to have received his education; at Bangor and Down, in the island of Iubisbofin, and at Mayo."

Besides this enumeration of schools, or colleges, our author gives an account of the course of education pursued in these seminaries, which, if true, (and certainly the authorities quoted are nowise deficient in number and respectability,) reflects the truest glory upon Ireland. Briefly as we must dismiss this interesting topic, we cannot pass in total silence the proud boast of our early astronomical attainments, evinced in the fact that an Irishman first discovered the spheroidal figure of the earth:—

"Virgilius, whom Bruschius calls 'vir pietate et doctrina clarus,' and whose country is marked by Alcuin, in the well known epigram:

"Egregius præsul meritis et moribus almus,
Profuli in lucem quem mater Hibernia primum,
Instituit,—docuit,—nutrivit."

this very Virgilius, in the year 767, asserted the spherical figure of the earth, at a time when all Europe was ignorant of the fact, and combated the opinions of Lactantius, Augustin, and other fathers of the Church, who supposed that the earth had a plane surface.—Pope Zachary, in a letter to Boniface, entitled 'De causâ Virgillii Hiberni,' strangely misconceives and execrates this novel opinion, as tending to irreligion and infidelity, and actually sentences its promulgator to excommunication and privation of clerical rank. Aventinus, however, draws a more correct view of the discovery and its author. The whole controversy on the subject is to be found in the works of Canisius, Aventine, and Velsér."

The third ruinous period of Danish oppression, is one continued series of massacres, burnings and devastations; but our limits will not at present permit us to enter upon the melancholy recital, and we must reserve this, and the remaining period to the coming of Henry II. for a third and concluding notice, of which, for many reasons, we think it eminently worthy.